

DTF Q&A Panel 9/14/22

Please note: We received too many questions that deserve in depth answers to address in 60 minutes. We will do our best in the panel format. The DTF has spent hours reading and researching for every single question submitted. We will discuss as many questions as time permits each Wednesday night. We will post more detailed answers on our DOF website.

Some of your questions were very similar in nature and some have been combined, so you might not see your exact wording.

The DTF clarified the questions asked as a group. The DTF reviewed collaborative answers provided by DTF members, clergy and others to ensure the responses were balanced.

Yes. IF we act prior to the expiration of 2553 (officially December 2023, but effectively June 2023 for the LA annual conference), then we can achieve full ownership of our campus and endowments. Outside of paragraph 2553, our property and endowments are held in trust by the Louisiana annual conference.

- A. There are many Methodist churches in our city and state having this conversation in various ways. Small, medium and large churches are talking about this issue. Large congregations like ours have the people, the resources and the diversity of views that are demanding a conversation from the clergy.
- B. LA conference approved 9 churches in disaffiliation in June 2022, at least 7 more will be voted on in November 2022.
- C. We couldn't NOT talk about this. Too many of our church members were coming to the leadership and asking what was happening. It was time to talk, time to educate, and most importantly, time to pray. Families

fight. Families have disagreements. But we can't hide from those. We have to communicate and walk through the tension.

- D. The likely separation of the UMC was to be considered at GC 2020 with the Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation. Due to evolving circumstances and the delay of General Conference, most leading centrists and Bishops have withdrawn their support for the Protocol and pivoted to 2553 as a means of allowing churches to disaffiliate. Essentially, this moved the decision from a general church level to the local church. Many churches have been shielded from this controversy by General Conference, Bishops, and clergy. So we cannot speak to every church's response or knowledge to these issues. However, there are several churches in our area that have or are considering disaffiliation. In three of the five Texas conferences, where more transparency exists, about half the churches are considering disaffiliation (several hundred in total). The Texas Annual Conference for instance passed a resolution that every church in the conference has a right to hear a presentation from the "continuing" UMC and the Global Methodist Church.
- E. As to resource allocation, we again cannot speak for other churches in this regard. As a general comment, for those who have been following these controversies for many years, or have been delegates to General Conference, a permanent resolution to the Church's disorder over these matters would allow for a greater focus on the mission of the Church - a welcome development. Despite of our season of discernment, our commitment to missions and ministry has not diminished, in time allotment or finances.
- F. In one week of DTF activities, we have had members from more than 5 other local UMC churches attend our meetings. We have had others call to ask for our materials. While we are the only church in Shreveport city limits to enter into a time of prayer and education, there are many churches in Louisiana doing the same.

In addition, the missions and ministries of First United Methodist Church Shreveport have not stopped. Our entire staff remains committed to spreading the Gospel and loving our members and our neighbors. Michelle Osborn and Ashley Goad continue to lead our efforts in partnering with organizations in Shreveport and the world. No resources have been moved from our church budget nor missions designated funds. All mission commitments have been, or are being, met.

Clarification: Unknown how many Louisiana churches are in discernment - we've heard a rumor but cannot confirm that yet.

The lack of representation of Faithlink was not intentional. Rather, the SPT was very determined that there would be representation. While one regular attendee from Faithlink may seem negligible, the task force is small and the team found a dynamic representative from Faithlink.

When the team met, it agreed on 12 church members and 3 staff who would comprise the DTF. Of those 12 church members, minimally one would be from FAITHLink. Lowery was nominated to represent FAITHLink, and accepted.

We are avoiding overtly "political" rhetoric and using more commonly used UMC industry standard language over these differences, thus "Traditionalist, Centrist, Progressive".

Yes.

To date, no church that has fulfilled the requirements of the process has been voted down by the annual conference. Now that a precedent has been set, it would be difficult for the AC to justify doing so to a particular church.

FUMCS Finance Committee: Humbly we would say that the funds needed for disaffiliation can be assembled (bank notification due to size, check prepared and signed) within a matter of hours. Of course, if congregants want to contribute to the cause they are welcomed to do so, but as of today God has already provided the necessary resources. Unfortunately, this is very costly, but we will still be left with a sizable reserve in these particular funds (like the Lord's loaves and fishes miracle!).

Traditionalists have determined that the UMC is ungovernable after trying for decades to amend the Book of Discipline, to little success in enforcing church law and restoring order to the church. It is noteworthy they have decided to leave, forgo control of General Conference and the overall financial and property assets of the denomination.

- A. SOME of the current leadership for national UMC/Council of Bishops is no longer upholding the current Book of Discipline..... (Blue flow chart power point slides)
- B. Had the Bishops enforced the discipline and taught our doctrine and social principles, as they are, regardless of their personal beliefs, then the UMC would likely not be in this position.

Statement Acknowledged.

Additional Statement Received: To channel the great Ronald Reagan ... "We didn't leave the UMC, the UMC left us." You on the Board are giving us facts. The authority of the Bible, and the Book of Discipline, must be taken as fact. Feelings can't override the facts.

Traditional churches choosing to disaffiliate are trying to avoid the costly and lengthy legal battle that would occur outside of paragraph 2553. While lawsuits remain an option, that route would be more divisive and expensive.

The Judicial Council, like our US Supreme Court, can clarify church law but has no power to enforce their decisions. That power resides with the Bishops, who are only accountable to the other Bishops in their Jurisdiction. If those Bishops are in agreement, they can successfully disregard the Judicial Council's decisions. Currently there are 2 of the 5 national Jurisdictions that stated publicly that they will not be enforcing the discipline in the future. This is a very large part of the current issue as many Bishops have installed pastors that teach theology inconsistent with the Book of Discipline, and many traditionalist believe is inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible. There is no clear path to resolve this issue, and it is causing many churches to disaffiliate from the UMC.

Q. The Judicial Council was discounted by the "Leadership" in the UMC in favor of positions clearly in violation of the Discipline, their Oath, and some long-held traditional Biblical/Christian concepts. How is it this happened? Why are these people not being held accountable? Why have they not been removed from their positions of influence and replaced by those with sufficient Courage to stand for the faith?

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Q. How are UMC Seminaries able to teach disrespect for traditional Christian beliefs and values which the faculty swore to support when ordained and remain open? My understanding from some minister friends this is widespread.

Seminaries are doing their own thing and fall more in line with academic principles of higher education rather than church principles. There are few accountability measures to encourage, let alone enforce, a different pedagogy. This is relevant because we fund these 13 seminaries and the students and faculties are not necessarily Methodists.

Ex- Illif Denver Seminary teaching paganism, hinduism, universalism, and Christianity.

There are no prohibitions for those who identify LGBTQIA+ to serve in a lay leadership capacity in The United Methodist Church per the 2016 Book of Discipline of the UMC. The Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline of the GMC provides a consistent stance with the 2016 Book of Discipline of the UMC on this issue.

In this quotation from John Wesley is taken a little out of context. It is discussing different forms of worship (contemporary or traditional music, white/purple grape juice - these are modern examples). It is not about fundamental differences in church doctrine. (The DTF will post this sermon onto the Discernment website so that the members can read it and make their own conclusions on what Wesley meant.)

The current issues in the UMC are by no means small. Many "traditionalist" believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God, and have tried to live their lives on it's principles. Asking them to reject words of the Bible is asking them to fundamentally change who they are, and many progressives feel the same way, but on the opposite end of the debate. These issues are worth discussing.

Love does not mean agreement. FUMCS will continue to accept and love people of all back grounds, as we always have, whether we disaffiliate or not. IF we decide to disaffiliate we absolutely should continue to show love to our brothers and sisters that remain united with UMC.

It is helpful to read Wesley's entire sermon on "Catholic Spirit" from where this quote originates, now available on our website. He details which matters can be of different opinions. Near the end Wesley states that we cannot be "driven to and fro and tossed about by every wind of doctrine." Rather Wesley specifies these as small differences like modes of worship. In our modern context, these differences might be like traditional vs. contemporary music, or red vs white communion juice, but not on the doctrine of Original Sin.

For your reading, we add the sermon to traditional viewpoints:

<http://www.umaffirm.org/cornet/catholic.html>

And, for another concerning example -

Reactions from the 2019 General Conference

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/gc2019-daily-feb-26>

I think we have forgotten how difficult and harmful that conference was, for all sides of the church.

Further reading below for your reference:

It is helpful to read Wesley's entire sermon "Catholic Spirit" which clarifies his quote and which matters can be of different opinions.

<http://www.umaffirm.org/cornet/catholic.html>

Near the end, Wesley states, "a catholic spirit is not speculative latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions: this is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being "driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine," is a great curse, not a blessing, an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend, to true catholicism. A man of a truly catholic spirit has not now his religion to seek. He is fixed as the sun in his judgment concerning the main branches of Christian doctrine. It is true, he is always ready to hear and weigh whatsoever can be offered against his principles; but as this does not show any wavering in his own mind, so neither does it occasion any. He does not halt between two opinions, nor vainly endeavor to blend them into one. Observe this, you who know not what spirit ye are of: who call yourselves men of a catholic spirit, only because you are of a muddy understanding; because your mind is all in a mist; because you have no settled, consistent principles, but are for jumbling all opinions together. Be convinced, that you have quite missed your way; you know not where you are. You think you are got into the very spirit of Christ; when, in truth, you are nearer the spirit of Antichrist. Go, first, and learn the first elements of the gospel of Christ, and then shall you learn to be of a truly catholic spirit."

A. The format for small conversation groups of 12-15 people was specifically outlined in the Minimum Standards for the Discernment

Period provided by the bishop and strongly encouraged by the district superintendent. The Discernment Task Force is making every effort to follow all guidelines that we have received from UMC leadership.

- B. You may also request to schedule a meeting with DTF members on the DOF website.

A. Optional. There are two options, one is to remain in the UMC as we are now. The other option is to disaffiliate from the UMC.

B. Either way, we will remain a Methodist congregation.

A. Each clergy member will have the option to disaffiliate and give up their UMC credentials or remain with the UMC. If the church votes to disaffiliate and the clergy remains with the UMC, they would likely find a local church that is also staying with the UMC. If our church votes against disaffiliation, clergy members still have the option to leave the UMC and FUMCS.

B. This church will take care of clergy and staff that remain with the church either way.

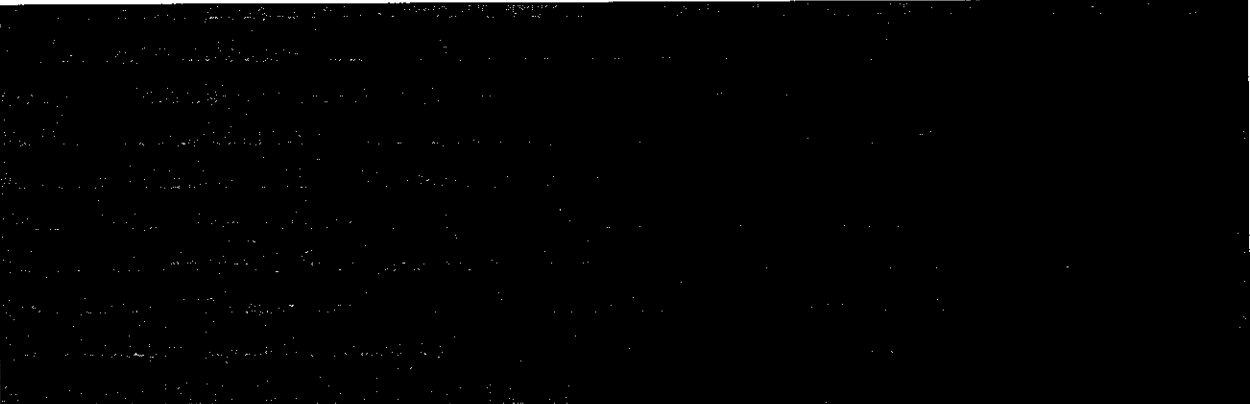
A. Gaining church ownership is a by-product of disaffiliation, just as the "gay issue" is a by-product of the fundamental theological differences in the UMC. If FUMCS does decide to move forward with disaffiliation, it will be due to theological differences, not a "gay issue" or to solely gain ownership of property.

A. All of our ministries are important and vital - our discernment period is ultimately about protecting and guaranteeing continued success of those ministries well into the future.

B. The answer is clear. BOTH AND. Michelle Obsorn leads an incredible Local Missions initiative for our church. Because of her, with the Local Missions Committee and our committed congregation, we are meeting the needs of countless individuals and families through our local mission partnerships. This has not stopped and will not stop, even through our season of discernment, prayer, and education.

In addition, our global partners in ministry have joined us in prayer. They are committed to praying for our church and its leadership and members for this 40 days. Our mission ministries are not just something we do; they are vital members of our church family. When they hurt, we hurt. When we hurt, they hurt. They are walking with us during this time.

Additional Questions:



- A. The article in the Columns was written in April for the back-to-school portion of the August Columns. It was completed before the Church Council even met about Discernment in July 2022. It was not requested by the Strategic planning team or the Discernment Task Force, so it's not a reflection of bias or credibility.
- B. FUMCS Communications requested that Pastor Erik write an article on the difficulty of sending our kids back to school with the current cultural teachings. So it was well before our DTF was ever formed and it had nothing to do with the church's exit. It did, however, have intention to teach that we as a church have to teach truths about who God created us to be even when culture tells a different story. So, no, the intention or origination had nothing to do with the church affiliation. It was just a pastor being pastoral :)
- C. This question is tough to answer because the premise is not true. "The article is also hurtful to members of the congregation, family members of congregation members, and the neighbors we are taught to love as ourselves." You can't really address the question w/o first addressing that this isn't accurate. The article, the sermon and the SS lessons are all done through the love of Jesus. When we love people, we share with

them from a place of sacrifice and care for them in both grace and truth. To forsake truth isn't love, just as forsaking grace isn't.

A Proposed Definition of Truth

In defining truth, it is first helpful to note what truth is not:

- Truth is *not* simply whatever works. This is the philosophy of pragmatism—an ends-vs.-means-type approach. In reality, lies can appear to "work," but they are still lies and not the truth.
- Truth is *not* simply what is coherent or understandable. A group of people can get together and form a conspiracy based on a set of falsehoods where they all agree to tell the same false story, but it does not make their presentation true.
- Truth is *not* what makes people feel good. Unfortunately, bad news can be true.
- Truth is *not* what the majority says is true. Fifty-one percent of a group can reach a wrong conclusion.
- Truth is *not* what is comprehensive. A lengthy, detailed presentation can still result in a false conclusion.
- Truth is *not* defined by what is intended. Good intentions can still be wrong.
- Truth is *not* how we know; truth is what we know.
- Truth is *not* simply what is believed. A lie believed is still a lie.
- Truth is *not* what is publicly proved. A truth can be privately known (for example, the location of buried treasure).

The Greek word for "truth" is *aletheia*, which literally means to "un-hide" or "hiding nothing." It conveys the thought that truth is always there, always open and available for all to see, with nothing being hidden or obscured. The Hebrew word for "truth" is *emeth*, which means "firmness," "constancy" and "duration." Such a definition implies an everlasting substance and something that can be relied upon.

From a philosophical perspective, there are three simple ways to define truth:

1. Truth is that which corresponds to reality.
2. Truth is that which matches its object.
3. Truth is simply telling it like it is.

First, truth corresponds to reality or "what is." It is real. Truth is also correspondent in nature. In other words, it matches its object and is known by its referent. For example, a teacher facing a class may say, "Now the only exit to this room is on the right." For the class that may be facing the teacher, the exit door may be on their left, but it's absolutely true that the door, for the professor, is on the right.

Truth also matches its object. It may be absolutely true that a certain person may need so many milligrams of a certain medication, but another person may need more or less of the same medication to produce the desired effect. This is not relative truth, but just an example of how truth must match its object. It would be wrong (and potentially dangerous) for a patient to request that their doctor give them an inappropriate amount of a particular medication, or to say that any medicine for their specific ailment will do.

In short, truth is simply telling it like it is; it is the way things really are, and any other viewpoint is wrong. A foundational principle of philosophy is being able to discern between truth and error, or as Thomas Aquinas observed, "It is the task of the philosopher to make distinctions."

Challenges to Truth

Aquinas' words are not very popular today. Making distinctions seems to be out of fashion in a postmodern era of relativism. It is acceptable today to say, "This is true," as long as it is not followed by, "and therefore that is false." This is especially observable in matters of faith and religion where every belief system is supposed to be on equal footing where truth is concerned.

There are a number of philosophies and worldviews that challenge the concept of truth, yet, when each is critically examined it turns out to be self-defeating in nature.

The philosophy of relativism says that all truth is relative and that there is no such thing as absolute truth. But one has to ask: is the claim "all truth is relative" a relative truth or an absolute truth? If it is a relative truth, then it really is meaningless; how do we know when and where it applies? If it is an absolute truth, then absolute truth exists. Moreover, the relativist betrays his own position when he states that the position of the absolutist is wrong—why can't those

who say absolute truth exists be correct too? In essence, when the relativist says, "There is no truth," he is asking you not to believe him, and the best thing to do is follow his advice.

Those who follow the philosophy of skepticism simply doubt all truth. But is the skeptic skeptical of skepticism; does he doubt his own truth claim? If so, then why pay attention to skepticism? If not, then we can be sure of at least one thing (in other words, absolute truth exists)—skepticism, which, ironically, becomes absolute truth in that case. The agnostic says you can't know the truth. Yet the mindset is self-defeating because it claims to know at least one truth: that you can't know truth.

The disciples of postmodernism simply affirm no particular truth. The patron saint of postmodernism—Frederick Nietzsche—described truth like this: "What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms ... truths are illusions ... coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins." Ironically, although the postmodernist holds coins in his hand that are now "mere metal," he affirms at least one absolute truth: the truth that no truth should be affirmed. Like the other worldviews, postmodernism is self-defeating and cannot stand up under its own claim.

A popular worldview is pluralism, which says that all truth claims are equally valid. Of course, this is impossible. Can two claims—one that says a woman is now pregnant and another that says she is not now pregnant—both be true at the same time? Pluralism unravels at the feet of the law of non-contradiction, which says that something cannot be both "A" and "Non-A" at the same time and in the same sense. As one philosopher quipped, anyone who believes that the law of non-contradiction is not true (and, by default, pluralism is true) should be beaten and burned until they admit that to be beaten and burned is not the same thing as to not be beaten and burned. Also, note that pluralism says that it is true and anything opposed to it is false, which is a claim that denies its own foundational tenet.

The spirit behind pluralism is an open-armed attitude of tolerance. However, pluralism confuses the idea of everyone having equal value with every truth claim being equally valid. More simply, all people may be equal, but not all truth claims are. Pluralism fails to understand the difference between opinion and truth, a distinction Mortimer Adler notes: "Pluralism is desirable and tolerable only in those areas that are matters of taste rather than matters of

truth."

The Offensive Nature of Truth

When the concept of truth is maligned, it is usually for one or more of the following reasons:

One common complaint against anyone claiming to have absolute truth in matters of faith and religion is that such a stance is "narrow-minded." However, the critic fails to understand that, by nature, truth is narrow. Is a math teacher narrow-minded for holding to the belief that $2 + 2$ only equals 4?

Another objection to truth is that it is arrogant to claim that someone is right and another person is wrong. However, returning to the above example with mathematics, is it arrogant for a math teacher to insist on only one right answer to an arithmetic problem? Or is it arrogant for a locksmith to state that only one key will open a locked door?

A third charge against those holding to absolute truth in matters of faith and religion is that such a position excludes people, rather than being inclusive. But such a complaint fails to understand that truth, by nature, excludes its opposite. All answers other than 4 are excluded from the reality of what $2 + 2$ truly equals.

Yet another protest against truth is that it is offensive and divisive to claim one has the truth. Instead, the critic argues, all that matters is sincerity. The problem with this position is that truth is immune to sincerity, belief, and desire. It doesn't matter how much one sincerely believes a wrong key will fit a door; the key still won't go in and the lock won't be opened. Truth is also unaffected by sincerity. Someone who picks up a bottle of poison and sincerely believes it is lemonade will still suffer the unfortunate effects of the poison. Finally, truth is impervious to desire. A person may strongly desire that their car has not run out of gas, but if the gauge says the tank is empty and the car will not run any farther, then no desire in the world will miraculously cause the car to keep going.

Some will admit that absolute truth exists, but then claim such a stance is only valid in the area of science and not in matters of faith and religion. This is a philosophy called logical positivism, which was popularized by philosophers such as David Hume and A. J. Ayer. In essence, such people state that truth

claims must either be (1) tautologies (for example, all bachelors are unmarried men) or (2) empirically verifiable (that is, testable via science). To the logical positivist, all talk about God is nonsense.

Those who hold to the notion that only science can make truth claims fail to recognize is that there are many realms of truth where science is impotent. For example:

- Science cannot prove the disciplines of mathematics and logic because it presupposes them.
- Science cannot prove metaphysical truths such as, minds other than my own do exist.
- Science is unable to provide truth in the areas of morals and ethics. You cannot use science, for example, to prove the Nazis were evil.
- Science is incapable of stating truths about aesthetic positions such as the beauty of a sunrise.
- Lastly, when anyone makes the statement "science is the only source of objective truth," they have just made a philosophical claim—which cannot be tested by science.

And there are those who say that absolute truth does not apply in the area of morality. Yet the response to the question, "Is it moral to torture and murder an innocent child?" is absolute and universal: No. Or, to make it more personal, those who espouse relative truth concerning morals always seem to want their spouse to be absolutely faithful to them.

God and Truth

During the six trials of Jesus, the contrast between the truth (righteousness) and lies (unrighteousness) was unmistakable. There stood Jesus, the Truth, being judged by those whose every action was bathed in lies. The Jewish leaders broke nearly every law designed to protect a defendant from wrongful conviction. They fervently worked to find any testimony that would incriminate Jesus, and in their frustration, they turned to false evidence brought forward by liars. But even that could not help them reach their goal. So they broke another law and forced Jesus to implicate Himself.

Once in front of Pilate, the Jewish leaders lied again. They convicted Jesus of blasphemy, but since they knew that wouldn't be enough to coax Pilate to kill Jesus, they claimed Jesus was challenging Caesar and was breaking Roman

law by encouraging the crowds to not pay taxes. Pilate quickly detected their superficial deception, and he never even addressed the charge.

Jesus the Righteous was being judged by the unrighteous. The sad fact is that the latter always persecutes the former. It's why Cain killed Abel. The link between truth and righteousness and between falsehood and unrighteousness is demonstrated by a number of examples in the New Testament:

- For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged *who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness*" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, emphasis added).
- "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who *suppress the truth in unrighteousness*" (Romans 1:18, emphasis added).
- "who will render to each person according to his deeds; to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and *do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness*, wrath and indignation" (Romans 2:6-8, emphasis added).
- "[love] does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, *does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth*" (1 Corinthians 13:5-6, emphasis added).

What Is Truth? - Conclusion

The question Pontius Pilate asked centuries ago needs to be rephrased in order to be completely accurate. The Roman governor's remark "What is truth?" overlooks the fact that many things can have truth, but only one thing can actually be the Truth. Truth must originate from somewhere.

The stark reality is that Pilate was looking directly at the Origin of all Truth on that early morning almost two thousand years ago. Not long before being arrested and brought to the governor, Jesus had made the simple statement "I am the truth" (John 14:6), which was a rather incredible statement. How

could a mere man be the truth? He couldn't be, unless He was more than a man, which is actually what He claimed to be. The fact is, Jesus' claim was validated when He rose from the dead (Romans 1:4).

Did God err in creating gay persons?

A. The Articles of Religion (VII) and the EUB Confession of Faith(VII), part of our official church doctrine and law, both affirm the Doctrine of Original Sin. The EUB states it as:

- "We believe man is fallen from righteousness and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. In his own strength, without divine grace, man cannot do good works pleasing and acceptable to God. We believe, however, man influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit is responsible in freedom to exercise his will for good."
- Tim Tennent (President, Asbury Seminary) in his book "For the Body", answers the question this way:
- "I was born this way" is not a violation of Christian teaching. In fact, every person is "born with" disordered affections of various kinds, and every Christian struggles to submit these to God's redemptive work. The point of contention is not the admission that we are born with these desires, but the assumption that being born with them means they are good. That's not what Christianity teaches....
"In contrast, people often use the phrase "God made me this way" to argue that biblical texts prohibiting certain behaviors are not binding upon us since God is somehow the "cause" behind these longings and desires. However, we need to be clear that when God created us "very good" (reference to earlier chapter on Genesis 1), God did not create us with a sinful nature or disordered propensities. Christian teaching holds that whatever propensities or inclinations that Scripture declares to be disordered affections are the result of the fall and should not be attributed to God. We should never confuse our original design with our fallen inclinations or orientations."
Lastly, it is worth noting that the concept of sexual orientation is a human invented theory of the 19th century with a convoluted history. To this day, no objective research has ever been able to confirm it through purely genetic or biological research - rather, most people accept the theory from subjective experience. Though this narrative has persisted for most of the culture as an accepted reality for generations, even now the more recent progressive Sex and Gender research describes sexual inclinations as more fluid than

fixed. Regardless, as reconciled image bearers, it is helpful to remember that one of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control.

This simple question requires years of study and prayer to understand and answer. But let's attempt to do that in one short answer:

God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and perfect in all of his ways (Psalm 18:30). God created us in his perfect image (Genesis 1:27). But then, humans rejected God and his commands and sin came into the world (see more or less the rest of the Bible). The real question being asked is: Is homosexuality a sin? Leviticus 18:22: "Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable" (NIV). Did God err when he commanded Moses to put this in the law? If God cannot err, we have a dilemma. Did God create people as homosexual? Does original sin exist? Psalm 51:5: Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Did God create me to be lustful, prideful, or dozen other sins that I am guilty of? Original sin is consistent with scripture. Did God change his mind regarding homosexuality: "for I the Lord do not change, therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed." (Malachi 3:6). God does not change his mind. Scripture would seem to suggest that homosexuality is a sin.

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Thank God for his son Jesus, the Cross, and our salvation.